INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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TO: Secretary of State

NO: 107, July 24, 5 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

EXCISE

In broadcast to nation July 22 Leopold said that his hand was stretched out to anyone who like himself wanted to serve this country. For first time in address of this nature he boldly mentioned military events of 18-days' war in 1940 and hailed war effort of Belgians abroad after military resistance in Belgium had ceased. He said "solidarity which was thus affirmed between Belgians is fortunately maintained after war between Belgium and the Allies. Collaboration which is affirmed on Occidental and Atlantic scale constitutes guaranty of prosperity and peace". Calling on people for concord and burying the hatchet, King promised to forget polemics against him and to think only of future. He said, "The King is symbol of continuity of the nation. He is a counselor placed above party strife, respectful of decisions of majority, attentive to opinions of minority. No matter what new tests the future may impose on me this role will be mine".

755.11

Pro-Leopold papers today published photographs of Prince Baudouin and his brother Albert bestowing decorations on Belgians "for acts of courage and devotion". [redacted]

[redacted] widespread comment on manner of Leopold's return (EMBTEL 100, July 22), protected by 8,000 guards, riding inconspicuously in a Ford while the lead car, a limousine with the royal standard, went [redacted] with Generals Piron and Baele as passengers. Thus, Socialist LE PEUPLE headlined this morning: "Gendarmes are much more numerous around Laeken Palace than German sentinels during occupation".

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Prime Minister Duvieusart presented resignation of his Cabinet to King on 22nd but was immediately requested by Leopold to remain in office and accepted this charge. Meeting of Crown Council fizzled when Liberal Ministers of State attending were informed no discussion was expected of King's declaration and thereupon walked out.

Socialists

755.00/7-2450

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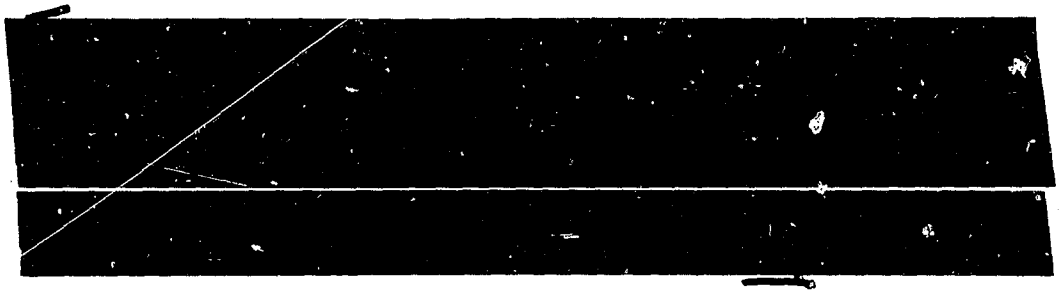

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On whole, country is calm. Fact that we are now at season of paid vacations makes it almost impossible for Socialists to call general strike although they talk darkly of presuming a series of strikes for "workingmen's objectives" when season of paid vacations has passed.

In sum and on basis of King's first three days back in Belgium we are inclined to believe that he has reason to be gratified with tranquility in country and with general ineffectiveness of opposition. He has however, no reason to feel that he is popular. Some time ago Van Zeeland told me King's return would not alter present foreign policy line. Present circumstances will quickly test this prophecy.

MURPHY

BA:AAL